



Department of Veterans Affairs

Soldiers & Sailors Bldg
425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone 605.773.3269
Fax 605.773.5380

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact: Audry Ricketts at 605-773-8242 or audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

South Dakota Elks Association Donate Monies to Fund Flags at Medal of Honor Monuments

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Elks Association has a long history of supporting veterans, military personnel and their families. Jeff Hallem, past exalted ruler of Pierre Elks Lodge #1953, on behalf of the South Dakota Elks Association, presented Steve Harding, Deputy Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs with a check for \$600 for the Medal of Honor Monument flag fund.

"The South Dakota Elks Association has been providing South Dakota, United States of America, and POW flags for the Medal of Honor Monuments since 2002," said Hallem.

"This is just one of many programs that are designed to keep true to the Elks pledge: 'So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.'"

"The Department is honored to assist the Elks with this project," said Deputy Secretary Harding. "We are thankful for the Elks continued support of these monuments and appreciate the communities of Sisseton, Sturgis, Sioux Falls, Brookings, Spearfish, Toronto, Custer, and Hot Springs for their work in preserving these monuments."

The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration awarded by the United States government. It is bestowed on a member of the United States armed forces who distinguishes himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States. Because of the nature of its criteria, the medal is often awarded posthumously.